THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: This happened especially on the International Women's Day.

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: Yes. That is how they celebrated the Day.

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA (Andhra Pradesh): They celebrated it that way.

उपसभापति : कालदाते जी, वही बात कहेंगे आप भी या इस बारे में कुछ और कहेंगे ?

डा० बापू कालदाते (महाराष्ट्र) : मैं उतना ही कहूंगा ।

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: These things you should mention from the Chair itself, Madam.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes, I am mentioning from the Chair that they should have restraint on peaceful agitations. That is all.

डा० बापू कालदाते : महोदया, एक ही बात मुझे कहनी थी कि अभी आपने चण्डीगढ़ का मसला सुना और यह दिल्ली का है । यह यूनियन टैरिटरी की जो पुलिस है वह शायद लगता है कि यूनियन टैरिटरी की नहीं परन्तु यूनियन जैक टैरिटरी की है ऐसा मुझे लग रहा है । यह तो हिन्दुस्तानी है ही नहीं, इसका ऐसा मतलब हो रहा है कि यहां-वहां चण्डीगढ़ देखिए और दिल्ली देखिए पुलिस क्या करती है यह बात बिल्कुल साफ है । मैं दो बातों की मांग करता हूं जैसा कि सब लोगों ने यह कहा है कि यहां महिला पुलिस का रहना अत्यावश्यक है, क्योंकि खबर यह है कि जो हमारी मित्र वहां महिला कार्यकर्ता थीं उन्होंने हम से यह बताया है कि पहले तो पुलिस वहां थी ही नहीं, तीन महिला पुलिस आईं जब मार-पीट शुरू की गई थी और यह तीन पुलिस कुछ कर नहीं पाई । एक दर्शक के रूप में वहां खड़ी रहीं । इसके अलावा कुछ नहीं हो पावा । इसलिए यह एक बहुत गंभीर मामला है कि अगर महिलाएं हों और वहां महिला पुलिस न हो तो यह सब से बुरी बात है । दूसरी बात यह है कि इन बातों की जांच इसलिए भी करनी चाहिए जैसे खुद कह रही थी कि एक अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय महिला दिन पर जहां हम एक जलूस मना रहे हैं महिलाओं के अधिकारों का उसी समय महिलाओं के ऊपर यह दमन और अत्याचार हों, यह अति गंभीर मामला है और इस के बारे में सरकार जांच करे । इस के साथ ही, महिला पुलिस तैनाती के बारे में भी सरकार ज्यादा ध्यान दे । धन्यवाद

Budget (Railways), 1989-90 — Contd.

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA (Andhra Pradesh): Madam Deputy Chairman, my friend, Shri Madhavrao Scindiaji is a scion of a very illustrious erstwhile royal family, and he does not believe in doing things in a niggardly manner, and everything he does in a royal manner.

THE DEPUY CHAIRMAN: Is it a compliment?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): It cannot be. There is something wrong. I have yet to see a smile on his face after his return from Andhra Pradesh.

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: I always smile in all circumstances.

THE DEPUY CHAIRMAN: Did you go by train?

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Madam, otherwise I cannot find any reason why in a single year he tried to mop up a whaking Rs. 876 crores which is roughly 12 to 13 per cent rise in the present Budget.

Many papers complimented him "THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS" particularly said that he was not a chicken-hearted Minister. This is his third budget. I do not know whether he had a premonition that this wruld be his last budget on behalf of this Government, and that is why he wanted to make it as stiff as possible. Fortunately, he excluded the passengers. That is understandable because goods are not voters; Passengers are.

Madam, this 11 per cent steep hike n the frerght rates is definitely inflationary, and its multiplying eeffct on the prices could well be imagined All

the press, all the commercial interests and the general public are unanimous in this appreciation of the Railway Budget. Closely following the rise in the administered prices in regard to coal, steel and cement, which fetched nearly Rs. 600 crores for this Government, this burden on the common man is unbearable irrespective of whatever the officials of the Railway Ministry say. They always say after each Budget this will have only 0.5 or 0.2 or 0.1 per cent effect. I don't know why they can't say even one per cent. Zero comes in everywhere. Every year we see what exactly happens after that and there is a multiplying effect of the Budget.

The hon. Minister has very nobly exempted certain categories. He said that in the special interest of the Kisan and keeping in mind the weaker and rural sections, he has exempted certain commodities like salt, fruits and vegetables gur and jaggery edible oils, oil seeds, oil cakes, fodder, livestock and organic manures. If anybody cares to read the previous budgets of the last several years, all these items are always exempted from any freight hike. This shows that no special consideration has been shown by Mr. Scindia in this regard. There are other items of common man's consumption like sugar, tea, kerosene and textiles If he has got any concern for the por man, he should have exempted them also. He has not spared even the parcel and luggage rates. He has increase l them also.

More than that I always pay compliments to his smartness. In the name of rationalisation and re-classification, he has mopped up a few hundred crores of rupees. I only quote one paper which agrees with my description of the Minister as a smart Minister. The economis Times said:

> "In certain cases the hike may turn out to be more than 11 per cent. This is because of a little trick played by Mr. Scindia in the garb of fright rationalisation. Thus, commodities, which fall under class 80 special to Class 150, have been moved upwards by two steps and hence will inbite a higher tariff. Even fertilisers, foodgrains and pulses have been moved ahead by one step each into a higher freight category. It is obvious that the resulting increase in prices of most artices of mass consumption will cause more harm to the middle and poor income groups than the benefits bestowed by Mr. Scindia in the form of no change in passenger fares, some increases in passenger amenities and catchy reliefs for sportsmen and senior citizens."

This is the trick the Minister has played and there is no doubt that this Budget will add to the spiralling rise in prices. It also adds to the burden of the public sector undertakings, particularly the State Electricity Boards, which will be affected adversely. They may again increase the electricity charges for the farmers and the domestic consumers also.

Now, I would like to raise a fundamental question here. Every year the other departments of the Government of India and other undertakings increase their prices — the coal price, the steel price, the cement price and all that — and that becomes an excuse for the Railways to increase the freight rates and fares. If the effect is of Rs. 135 crores, they take this excuse and go up to the extent of Rs. 876 crores or something like that. And then the Railway Budget will have an effect on the prices. It will lead to demands for more dearness allowances including that of the railwaymen. That is added to the burden of the Railways again next year and they want to cover it up by more increases. This has become a vicious circle. I am not a very good economist in this matter, but if the public sector undertakings like Coal India or the steel plants or the cement factories under the control of the Government of

(Shri Parvathneni Upendra)

India revise their prices, why not they also think of insulating the Railways, which is a public sector undertaking and also a public utility service, from the impact of these increases so that these do not have a multiplying effect and also an adverse effect on the Railways, thus forcing them to resort to hikes in fares and freight rates? I do not know whether it is possible, but it can be examined. And also there is another argument the Railway Minister puts forward every time that our passenger fares are the lowest in the world. Maybe if you convert it into rupees or when you think in terms of Dollars or Pounds they are cheaper. We have also seen some of the railways abroad but the comforts they give for that fare are no comparison to the conditions on the Indian railways — speed with which the trains are run and even arangements like refund when the train is late. For example, on Japanese railways if a train is late the fare is refunded. We don't have such kind of arrangement here but when it comes to fare we always claim ours is the lowest, forgetting the conditions in which passengers travel in this country.

What is the general impression this budget gives?

The second largest railway network in the world is far from being a viable commercial undertaking. I will give a few examples for that. The first point is that over 90 per cent of the income is going for wages and operating expenses and very little is left for expansion, modernisation or creation of assets. The operating ratio which is the percentage of woking expenses to the goss income, is not coming down in spite of modernisation and it is going up. For example, in 1977-78 the operating ratio was 83 per cent. It has gone up to 90.6 per cent in 1985-86. It became 92 8 per cent this year and the next year the fear is that it may go up to 95 per cent

Secondly, the surpluses are falling year to year despite steep increases in the fares and freight rates. For example, in 1985-86, the surplus was Rs. 178.83 crores. In 1986-87 it was Rs. 101 crores. In 1987-88 it was Rs. 28 crores. In 1989-90 they project Rs. 140 crores. Because this is linked with the development fund, if the surplus is declining it is a setback to the development fund also and to that extent. the development works suffer.

Thirdly, the ratio of net revenue to capital at charge, that is, profitability, has also been showing a consistent decline. If you take these two years, it was 6.5 per cent in 1988-89, it is supposed to be. Next year they project only 6.2 per cent.

Now, there are 140 uneconomic branch lines operating in this country which continue to lose about Rs. 75 crores annually and there is no policy of this Government what to do with these uneconomic branch lines. Several Committees habe recommended that there should be a proper coordination between the road transport and the railways but still railways are running these lines. I do not know whether they have again made a review of functioning of these uneconomic branch lines so as to facilities a decision about their continuance or otherwise.

Then, the next point is that indebtedness to the General Revenues has crossed about Rs. 1000 crores. Now, whether it is a deferred dividend liabilrty or whatever it is, now they owe about Rs. 1000 crores to the General Revenue I have been constantly advocating and I have no hesitation to repeat it today that railways need not be burdened with this heavy divided liability and there would be consideration for the railways and whatever is due to the General Fevenues has to be writtten off. That is my stand. I repeat it.

Now, the freight traffic has definitely increased and I must complimtnt the Railway Minister, the railway ad-

ministration and the railwaymen for the exccellent encouraging rise in the freight traffic because it was hovering around 215 million tonnes for several years and now we have crossed 340 million tonnes. It is a good sign and thrugh there was a drop in the expected traffic this year because of various factors, I hope, at the end of the Seventh Plan, we will be able to reach the target. There was a 9 per cent growth in GNP this year but the railway traffic growth was only 4.3 per cent. Next year, the GNP growth is supposed to be 5 per cent but the Railways project only 4 per cent increase. Even in 1989-90, whateber the traffic target has been put, it is less than the actual performance of 1987-88. There is also a continuous fall in the passenger traffic and I do not know the reasons. Whether the Railway Ministry has analysed it or whether it is due to competrtion from the road traffic or whether it is due to cancellation of a number of trains on the various zonal railways. I do not know. But there is a fall in the expected passenger traffic. The inroad by the road transport in the highrated traffic cirtinuts. I do not advocate for any business people or the industrialists but I received a note. I would like to read a paragraph from that for the infomation of the Minister. This note says, "the highrated frerght traffic is going to the roadways because of various factors and one is "he says" unethical norms have been introduced by the Railways to deny claims and charge demurrages. The demurrages are being charged exorbitantly, as much as Rs. 2500 per day per wagon. Even if the wagon arrives on Sundays or national holdidays, wagons are not berng unloaded in godowns to force the customer to pay demurrages. Under-charges are being collected in most of the consignments as if it is only the booking clerk who makes mirtake in calculation of freight and not the delivery cleark."

I would like the Minister to enquire into this.

The Minister has rightly claimed that the productivity and utilisation of assets have improved tremendously. There is no doubt about that and the frerght traffic, as I said, has exceeded 340 million tonnes, the net tonne kilometrage to the extent of 252 billion, that is 9.1 per cent above the target. The net tonne kilometrage for wagon day, the target was 1350 for the Seventh Plan. They have reached it in 1987-88 itself. All the physical targets in these matters have already been reached. To that extent, they must be complimented. But the fact is, if you read the Minister's statement, " in the first three years of the Seventh Plan, transport output of freight rose by 27 per cent and passenger kms by about 19 per cent. This was achieved with only a marginal addition of 0.9 per cent to running track kms and to manpower and despite a slight decrease in wagons, in coaching fleet and in aggregate motive power." You can interpret it in any manner you like. I have been telling, last year also I mentioned that no doubt the system is being utilised to the optimum extent possible, but you are flogging the system to the utmost and squeezing whatever is possible from the existing system without caring for its long term effect on it and without caring for its expansion. In many areas of development, such as the track renewal, electrification replacement and modernisation of rolling stock and equipment there are large leeways to be made up. And the Minister said, by the end of the Eighth Plan he would be able to wipe out the backlog. I doubt because so many Ministers have been promising the same but the backlog continues. There is a big backlog.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Upendra, we have to adjourn now for lunch. You can continue after lunch. The House is adjourned now for lunch.

The House then adjourned for lunch at thitry-one minutes past one of the clock.

The House reassembled, after lunch, at thirty-two minutes past two of the clock. The Vice-Chairman (Shri Anand Sharma) in the Chair.

BUDGET (RAILWAYS) 1989-90— Contd.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): Shri Upendra to continue his speech.

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Mr. Vice-Chairman, I was mentioning, and I was quoting the Minister, how the system was being flogged to get the optimum results without concern for the future. If you take the net accretion of assets in physical terms in the last 38 years, it presents a patchy picture. In the Railways' Year Book, it has been clearly brought out, under the chapter "Utilisation of assets and productivity". They said, in 1950-51, if you take that as the base year, the traffic output index was 100; in 1987-88 freight traffic index was 524, passenger index was 363, and wagon capacity as compared to that, was only 260; passenger coaches 210, route kms 116—the length of route kms since independence has increased by only 8380; it is about 200 kms. per year. In the rolling stock also the position is very dismal. In locomotives, diesel locomotives have increased only by 116 from 1986-87 to 1987-88 and electric locomotives by only 70. Similarly, in passenger coaches—they are less today—only 22 EMU coaches have been added since 1984-85. And, with regard to the passenger coaches, conventional coaches, their number is almost equal to what was there in 1980-81. Similarly, in the case of wagons also they are less today than in 1965-66. Their number is very much less compared to 1965-66. Despite the modernisation claims, the speeds of the trains are aslo coming down. According to the Railway Ministery's Year Book the average speed of the goods trains, which was, by diesel traction, 23.7 in 1965-66, came down to 22.9 in 1987-88. The electric locohauled freight trains' speed, which was 23.4 in 1965-66, has come down to 23.2 in 1987-88. So, the speeds have come down considerably. Even the wagon turn-round, that is, the number of days for a wagon to make two successive trips, which was 10.5 days in the year 1965-66, is 11.6 days today.

It shows that the system is coming to a hault gradually and it will pose a big problem in times to come. During the next decade, the passenger and freight traffic is expected to double and the capacity constraint will be very severe by that time. The Railways then will not be able to handle the increased traffic with the present rate of investment. I do not blame the Railways alone for this. There is no realisation on the part of the Government of India as a whole and the Planning Commission in particular and they do not realise the importance of the railways as a vital infrastructure and make sufficient allocations. In the Seventh Five Year Plan, the Railways wanted Rs. 16,917 crores and they allocated only Rs. 16,358 crores. In this year's Annual Plan, they got only Rs. 4,450 crores as against the demand for an allocation of Rs. 4,895 crores and out of that, only Rs. 1,400 crores comes as budgetary support from the General Revenues. The Railways themselves have raised about a thousand crores through the bonds and, today, I am happy to note that 61 per cent of the whole investment comes through railways' internal resources. If you see the budgetary support from the General revenues, which was about 75 per cent in the Fifth Plan, has come down now to 33 per cent in the current Plan. Because of this shortfall in resource allocation, the construction of new lines, electrification, gauge conversion, doubling, all these programmes, have suffered. Today if you see the figures, there are 26 ongoing new line projects covering 2,315